

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2392

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 5678

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJECT: UCR CALLS FOR PROBE

REF: BA 5587

1. UCR CONGRESSMEN ON AUGUST 20 DRAFTED RESOLUTION CALLING FOR CREATION OF BICAMERAL COMMITTEE TO INVESTIGATE (A) CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING MRS. PERON'S ATTEMPT TO DEPOSIT \$800,000 CHECK INTO THE ACCOUNT OF LATE HUSBAND, (B) THE "CRUZADA DE SOLIDARIDAD JUSTICIALISTA," THE PERONIST SOCIAL WELFARE ORGANIZATION UPON WHICH THE CHECK WAS DRAWN, AND (C) AN ACCOUNTING OF THE DISBURSEMENT OF FUNDS IN THE SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY FROM MAY 1973 TO THE PRESENT. UCR RESOLUTION HAS RECEIVED WIDE PUBLICITY AND SUPPORT FROM SOME SMALLER OPPOSITION PARTIES.

2. DURING SCHEDULED LEGISLATIVE SESSION AUGUST 21, UCR IN LOWER HOUSE ATTEMPTED TO PLACE RESOLUTION ON CONGRESSIONAL AGENDA. PERONISTS, APPARENTLY NOT WISHING TO DEBATE ISSUE OR EVEN HAVE IT RAISED IN CONGRESS AT THIS TIME, STAYED AWAY FROM SESSION SO THAT NO QUORUM COULD BE OBTAINED. PERONIST SENATE BLOC LEADER PEDRINI TOLD NEWSMEN THAT HE WAS GATHERING INFORMATION ON THE "COMPLEX" CHECK ISSUE AND WOULD MAKE A STATEMENT SATISFACTORY TO ALL CONCERNED ON MONDAY THE 26TH.

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3. IN LAST FEW DAYS, LA OPINION HAS BEEN CRITICAL OF FACT THAT ISSUE OF CHECK AND CORRUPTION IN SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTRY NOT BEING MORE VIGOROUSLY PURSUED BY CONGRESS AND GOA ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS. PAPER HAS REPORTED THAT OPPOSITION LEADERS HAVE PRIVATELY EXPRESSED RELUCTANCE TO PUSH ISSUES AT TIME OF GREAT STRAIN ON CIVILIAN INSTITUTIONS. UCR SOURCE CLOSE TO BALBIN MADE SAME POINT TO EMBOFF EARLIER THIS WEEK. LA OPINION, HOWEVER, HAS STRESSED POINT THAT FOR CIVILIAN INSTITUTIONS NOT TO PUSH INVESTIGATION WOULD GRAVELY WEAKEN CONSTITUTIONAL GOVERNMENT AND RESPECT FOR OFFICE OF PRESIDENCY. STUNG BY THIS CRITICISM AND FEELING PRESSURE FROM MANY UCR CONGRESSMEN, PARTY LEADERSHIP DECIDED TO ATTACK ISSUE HEAD-ON.

4. COMMENT: CONGRESSIONAL PERONISTS HAVE NOW BEEN PLACED IN DELICATE POLITICAL POSITION. FEW AMONG THEM EXPECT THAT PEDRINI WILL BE ABLE TO SATISFACTORILY EXPLAIN ISSUE OF CHECK, OR THAT UCR WILL BACK OFF ON REQUEST FOR PROBE. TO ALLOW INVESTIGATIONS TO GO FORWARD WOULD DOUBTLESS SURFACE NEW SCANDALS WHILE BALD USE OF CONGRESSIONAL MAJORITY TO SUPPRESS MATTER WOULD RESULT IN PUBLIC INDICTMENT OF CONGRESSIONAL PERONISTS IN COVER-UP.

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